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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CHENGDU 000077

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [CH](#)  
SUBJECT: URGING TAR FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON  
SEPTEMBER SHOOTING DEATH OF TIBETAN NUN

REF: 06 BEIJING 21638

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CLASSIFIED BY: James Boughner, Consul General, United States  
Consulate, Chengdu.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Consul General and Beijing Polmincouns urged Director General of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) Ju Jianhua to provide information on the Chinese investigation of the September 30, 2006 shooting (reftel) of border crossers by Chinese border guards at Nangpa La that resulted in the death of at least one young Tibetan nun. Ju said the matter was an issue of illegal border crossers. He asserted the Dalai Lama is "no longer" a religious figure, but that there is an "open door" for negotiations with his representatives if he admits Tibet is a part of China. Ju said that pursuant to new regulations in the run-up to the Olympics, foreign journalists are free to travel and conduct interviews in the TAR without permission of the FAO. Dramatic increases of tourism in the TAR have led to pressure on food, lodging and transportation resources, and still necessitate the entry permit system for foreign travelers. Ju stuck to his script of strong anti-Dalai Lama rhetoric and cold response to our human rights concerns, but stressed he would try to foster good relations with the United States Government, facilitate travel into the TAR, and consider creative ways to increase cultural and other exchanges. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During a March 12-17 reporting trip to the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), CG, Beijing Polmincouns and Congenoff met with TAR Foreign Affairs Office (FAO) Director Ju Jianhua. Ju, a Han Chinese who was born and raised in the TAR, was recently promoted from his position as Deputy Director of the FAO. (Note: Ju commented that Sonam, who he replaced as Director, was still senior to him in age and rank, and that he considered her an "equal." Sonam was appointed as a member of the TAR People's Political Consultative Conference. End Note.)

#### Human Rights Cases

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¶3. (C) The CG and Beijing Polmincouns urged that China provide information on the Chinese investigation of the September 30 shooting (reftel) of border crossers by Chinese border guards at Nangpa La that resulted in the death of at least one young Tibetan nun. Ju stated that the Tibetans were illegal border crossers. He said the central government published an official statement on the incident and that he would provide us with a copy. Beijing Polmincouns added that numerous Embassy Beijing

and other diplomatic missions in Beijing have asked for the results of the investigation, but that no information had been provided.

14. (C) The CG also asked about the reported prohibition on attendance of government, students and workers at the Gadan Ngachö festival in December 2006 to celebrate the birth of Tsong Ka Pa, the founder of the Gelug School of Tibetan Buddhism. Ju claimed the government didn't stop "ordinary people" from attending, but that Party members were told not to attend according to the rule that government officials may not practice religion. He asserted there were "religious religions" for the "lack of success" of the festival, but didn't provide a further explanation.

#### Anti-Dalai Lama Rhetoric

15. (C) Turning to the recent spate of anti-Dalai Lama rhetoric from TAR authorities, the CG advocated for continued negotiations between representatives of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government. Beijing Polmincouns added that the Dalai Lama is a religious figure respected in China and around the world and that government criticism of him damages China's international image. Ju asserted the Dalai Lama was "no longer" a religious figure. On negotiations, he said the door is open if the Dalai Lama admits Tibet is a part of China. Ju opined that as a monk, the Dalai Lama should focus on meditation, but instead he engages in international separatist activity. Ju went on to refer to the Dalai Lama as a "politician in Buddhist robes" who uses religion to interfere in Tibet and disturb peace and stability. He called on "everyone to rethink the Dalai Lama's 'real' nature."

16. (C) Ju affirmed his own membership in the Communist Party, but admitted he does "research" on Buddhism because it is very important for Tibetan people. If one wants to research Tibet, one cannot focus solely on the Dalai Lama, Ju opined. He claimed that many Western missionaries have in the past come to Tibet to try to convert Tibetan people, but were unsuccessful

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because of the importance of Buddhism in people's lives. Ju said that the Dalai Lama should develop Buddhism rather than working to destroy China. If he hopes return to China promote Buddhism, that is fine, but he cannot resume the "old system." Finally, Ju added that the international community does not understand Tibet's past or present.

#### Foreign Journalists

17. (SBU) Ju commented on the issue of press freedom in China, referring to the new regulations that allow journalists to travel and interview freely anywhere in China in the run-up to the Olympics. He said the FAO recently held a meeting for all TAR bureau heads to inform them it was their decision whether to accept interviews and that there was no longer need for the FAO to approve or arrange meetings with reporters. Ju said many bureaus are still hesitant and scared to accept interviews under this new set of rules. Ju stressed the rule definitely extended to the TAR, citing the visit of a journalist in late 2006 who came to interview different bureaus about economic development after the opening of the Qinghai - TAR railroad. He said he didn't hear about the interviews until after the journalist departed.

#### Tourism in Tibet

18. (SBU) When asked about the prospect for removal of the permit system for foreign tourists in the TAR, Ju said the system was still in place and launched into an explanation of the dramatic rise in tourism the region has experienced since the opening of the railroad in July 2006. Between July and December 2006, 250,000 people traveled in and out of the TAR by train. In a recent statement before the National People's Congress, TAR Chairman Zhang Qingli said the region was expecting 3 million tourists in 2007. Ju said he told Zhang

this was not feasible because of a shortage of hotel rooms and restaurants. Ju referred to the "three big problems" of food, lodging, and transportation, saying the region could not support such great numbers of tourists until all three areas were improved or increased.

¶9. (SBU) Ju also discussed pressure on the region's cultural sites, especially the limits on ticket sales for the Potala Palace. He noted that the government had received numerous complaints from inland Chinese tourists that they were unable to access many sites due to tourist density. Ju added that a new "cultural site" is being developed in the Shul Village at base of the Potala to deal with the overflow of tourists who cannot obtain tickets to see the Potala.

¶10. (SBU) Ju said that foreign and domestic investors, including U.S. companies, have already begun to consider investing in five-star hotels in Lhasa. There are different views of how to best support the development of the region. According to Ju, some Americans think investors from mainland China should not invest in Tibet and others have the opposite view.

¶11. (SBU) The CG suggested a change in the handling of diplomat tourists would relieve some of the pressure on the FAO. He said there was no need for FAO "assistance" and scheduling for groups of diplomatic passport holders who come to the region as tourists. Ju did not offer a concrete response to this suggestion.

NGOs

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¶12. (SBU) Congenoff asked Ju to comment on the status of foreign NGOs working in the region, asking specifically about NGOs in the process of renewing agreements. Ju complained he felt he was in a press conference and did not directly answer the question. He stated that since 1996, NGOs from 40 countries had carried out 600 projects in the TAR. Eighteen of those NGOs are from the United States. Ju said there are approximately 60 long-term and 400 short-term expatriate personnel of foreign NGOs currently living and working in the region.

Public Diplomacy

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¶13. (U) The CG thanked the FAO for the successful cultural visit of bluegrass banjo player Abby Washburn in late 2006. He also mentioned the recent inclusion by the Ministry of Education of Tibet University as an institution that can accept Fulbright scholars. Ju noted that cultural and educational exchange were important, adding that "Good Morning America" had been given permission to broadcast from the Potala Palace last October.

Comment

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¶14. (C) Ju's comments on the Dalai Lama are similar to those expressed by TAR Chairman Shamba Phuntsog, the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau, and United Front Work Department during our last visit to Lhasa in August 2006. They also mirror the heavy-handed public statements by TAR Party Chairman Zhang Qingli since he took office in May 2006. As expected, Ju stuck to his script of strong anti-Dalai Lama rhetoric and cold response to our human rights concerns. He stressed to the CG privately after the meeting, however, that while it is necessary for him to be fierce in his rhetoric at official meetings, he will do whatever he can to foster good relations with the United States Government, facilitate travel into the TAR, and consider creative ways to increase cultural and other exchanges.  
BOUGHNER